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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. **41920-00660**First Inventor or Application Identifier **Michael Nally et al.**Title **NET SCORING SYSTEM**

Express Mail Label No.

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☒ * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☒ Specification [Total Pages **12**]
(preferred arrangement set forth below)
 - Descriptive title of the Invention
 - Cross References to Related Applications
 - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
 - Reference to Microfiche Appendix
 - Background of the Invention
 - Brief Summary of the Invention
 - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
 - Detailed Description
 - Claim(s)
 - Abstract of the Disclosure
3. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets **4**]
(in duplicate)
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages **3**]
 - a. ☒ Newly ~~executed~~ **unexecuted** (original or copy)
 - b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 16 completed)
 - i. ☐ **DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)**
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).

ADDRESS TO:

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 20231

5. ☐ Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)
 - a. ☐ Computer Readable Copy
 - b. ☐ Paper Copy (identical to computer copy)
 - c. ☐ Statement verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

7. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
8. ☐ 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement ☐ Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignee)
9. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
10. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
11. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
12. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
13. ☐ * Small Entity Statement filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired
(PTO/SB/09-12)
14. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
(if foreign priority is claimed)
15. ☒ Other: **Check for \$760.00**

* NOTE FOR ITEMS 1 & 13: IN ORDER TO BE ENTITLED TO PAY SMALL ENTITY FEES, A SMALL ENTITY STATEMENT IS REQUIRED (37 C.F.R. § 1.27), EXCEPT IF ONE FILED IN A PRIOR APPLICATION IS RELIED UPON (37 C.F.R. § 1.28).

16. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No: _____

Prior application information: Examiner _____ Group / Art Unit: _____

For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 4b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

17. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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October 8, 1999

Assistant Commissioner For Patents
BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Washington, D.C. 20231

Re: New U.S. Patent Application
For: NET SCORING SYSTEM
Our Reference: 41920-00660

Dear Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing in the U.S. Patent Office in connection with the above-referenced application are the following documents: (1) Transmittal Letter; (2) Fee Calculation Sheet; (3) twelve pages of specification, including claims and abstract; (4) four sheets of drawings (in duplicate); (5) an unexecuted Declaration and Power of Attorney; and (6) a Check in the amount of \$760.00 to cover the U.S. Government filing fees.

Sincerely yours,



PATRICK J. COYNE, Registration No. 31,821
GLENN T. BARRETT, Registration No. 38,705

Enclosures

NET SCORING SYSTEM

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to a scoring system for use in sports activities. In particular, the present invention pertains to a net scoring system that can be used to accurately maintain the score of a sports contest, can be easily transported with a game net and can be used in a variety of sports activities at a variety of locations.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A portable game net is a useful piece of sporting equipment to own. Because sports enthusiasts can use game nets for a variety of sports activities, such as volleyball and badminton, game nets have become increasingly popular in recent years. Players may hang game nets between two fixed vertical structures, such as poles or trees, at varying heights above the ground, depending on the sports activity being played. As such, game nets are useful in backyards, over swimming pools, or any variety of playing surfaces where sports activities are played.

In playing sporting events using a game net, even the most casual player often desires to keep score of the contest. In many instances, this is achieved by each player simply keeping track of the score in his or her head. Because this method of scoring does not include a visual representation of the current score, however, it often leads to inaccurate scoring and requires each player to continually remember the current score and state it aloud so that all participants are informed. Scoreboards are often used at high school, college or professional sporting events, but are often too large, complex and stationary to be used in the variety of sporting venues where game nets are used by recreational players. Therefore, what is needed is a simple scoring system that a player can easily transport with a game net and use in a variety of sports activities at various game-playing locations.

The prior art has attempted to provide scoring systems. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,489,122 to Pittner discloses a personal tennis score keeper. U.S. Patent No. 5,385,113 to Hierath

discloses a tennis score keeper and display device. U.S. Patent No. 5,294,913 to Mower et al. discloses an indoor/outdoor portable basketball scoreboard and U.S. Patent No. 5,025,748 to Pettis teaches a portable scoring device. The designs of many of these devices are complex and require the players to transport equipment in addition to the game net. In addition, many of these scoring devices are not useful in physical locations where sporting activities using game nets are often played. Accordingly, there remains a need for a simple scoring system that a player can easily transport with a game net and use in a variety of sports activities at various game-playing locations.

The present invention answers the need for such a scoring system. The design of the present invention enables players to easily and accurately maintain the score of a sporting contest. In addition, because the present invention includes a game net, it can be conveniently transported without requiring additional equipment. Moreover, the present invention can be used in a variety of sports activities and at various game-playing locations.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a simple means for accurately keeping score of the number of points won during a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a simple means for accurately keeping score of the number of games won during a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide an easily visible indication of the score of a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a team with a visible indication of their score and their opponent's score in a sports activity that includes a game net.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a means for keeping score that can be easily transported with a game net.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a net scoring system that can be used in a variety of sports activities.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a net scoring system that can be used at a variety of game playing locations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention is directed to a net scoring system. The net scoring system has a game net which is of a generally rectangular shape and has a periphery defined by a top edge, a bottom edge, and opposing side edges. The game net also has a front face and a back face. The net scoring system also includes at least one indicating device for displaying a game score that is connected to the game net. The indicating device may be located on at least one of the top edge, the bottom edge, and the opposing side edges. Furthermore, the indicating device may be located on at least one of the front face and the back face of the game net.

10 In accordance with the present invention, the net scoring system may have a reinforcing tape that is attached to the top edge, the bottom edge, and the opposing side edges of the game net. Moreover, at least one indicating device having a plurality of scoring symbols may be located on the reinforcing tape. Furthermore, at least one indicating device may have a symbol indicating assembly for emphasizing one of the plurality of scoring symbols to represent a score.

15 In accordance with the present invention, the symbol indicating assembly may have a planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols may be made visible. Furthermore, the symbol indicating assembly may have a fastening device that extends from the planar surface for slidably attaching the symbol indicating assembly to the reinforcing tape.

20 The present invention is also directed to a net scoring system having a plurality of scoring symbols located on both the front face and the back face of the game net, such that the symbol indicating assembly is capable of emphasizing the same symbol on both the front face and the back face of the game net.

25 In accordance with the present invention, the symbol indicating assembly may include a first planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols

located on the front face of the game net may be made visible. The symbol indicating assembly may include a second planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols located on the back face of the game net may be made visible. The first planar surface is connected to the second planar surface such that the symbol indicating assembly is slidably attached to the reinforcing tape.

The indicating device according to the present invention may include an LCD display. The LCD display includes a processing device for adding a point to the current score and a processing device for resetting the current score to zero.

In accordance with the present invention, at least one indicating device may include a plate having a flat planar surface. The flat planar surface is formed to include at least one slot. A plurality of scoring symbols are located on the plate. At least one symbol indicating assembly is slidably attached to the plate through the slot. The plate according to the present invention may be fixedly attached to the reinforcing tape.

The present invention is also directed to a method of indicating the score of a sporting contest. The steps of the method may include providing a game net that includes at least one scoring symbol located on the game net, and at least one symbol indicating assembly connected to the game net. The steps of the method may also include selectively sliding at least one symbol indicating assembly over at least one scoring symbol to indicate the current score.

It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only, and are not restrictive of the invention as claimed. The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated herein by reference, and which constitute a part of the specification, illustrate certain embodiments of the invention, and together with the detailed description, serve to explain the principles of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described in conjunction with the following drawings in which like reference numerals designate like elements and wherein:

Fig. 1 is a front view of the net scoring system in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a front view of the indicating device of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a schematic view of the symbol indicating assembly of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a side view of the symbol indicating assembly according to another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a front view of the indicating device according to another embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 6 is a front view of the indicating device according to another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Reference will now be made in detail to a game net **10** and at least one indicating device **20** of the present invention, an example of which is illustrated in Fig. 1. The game net **10** is defined by a generally rectangular periphery which includes a top edge **11**, a bottom edge **12**, and two opposing side edges **13**. The game net **10** has a front face **101** and a back face **102** (as shown in Fig. 4). With reference to Fig. 1, a mesh fabric **14** extends across the area defined by the periphery of the game net **10**. A reinforcing tape **110** is attached to the top edge **11**, the bottom edge **12**, and the two opposing side edges **13**.

It is contemplated that the game net **10** may include reinforcing rods **15** which are inserted through a longitudinal opening within the reinforcing tape **110**. The game net **10** can be extended between two fixed structures, such as poles or trees (not shown), and secured to them using an appropriate hanging means **16**, such as, for example, a nylon cord. It is also contemplated that the game net **10** may include a locking assembly **17** for further securing the game net **10** to the fixed structures.

It is further contemplated that the present invention may be hung at various heights above the ground to be used for a wide variety of sports activities, including but not limited to, volleyball, badminton, tennis, and various swimming pool games. It is also contemplated that the present

invention may be used in a wide variety of locations, including but not limited to, backyards, beaches, parks, gymnasiums and over swimming pools.

In one embodiment of the present invention, as shown in Fig. 2, the at least one indicating device **20** for indicating the current score **201** of one of the teams is positioned on the reinforcing tape **110** attached to the bottom edge **12** of the game net **10**. The indicating device **20** includes a plurality of scoring symbols **21** connected to the reinforcing tape **110**. By way of example, the plurality of scoring symbols **21** could be a numeric range from zero (0) through fifteen (15), which is the range of scores for a typical volleyball game. Other numeric or symbolic ranges, however, are considered to be well within the scope of the present invention. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the plurality of scoring symbols **21** are printed on the reinforcing tape **110** of the game net **10**. However, it is contemplated that the plurality of scoring symbols **21** may be connected to the game net **10** in other ways, such as, for example, embroidering the symbols or using decals. Because the present invention includes both the game net **10** and the indicating device **20**, it allows a player to easily transport a scoring system without additional equipment.

The indicating device **20** also includes symbol indicating assembly **30** used to represent the current score **201** of one of the teams. The symbol indicating assembly **30** is slidably attached to reinforcing tape **110**. In one embodiment, as shown in Fig. 3, the symbol indicating assembly **30** includes a planar surface **31**, a void **32** through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols **21** (the current score **201**) is visible, and a fastening assembly **33** extending from the planar surface **31** for slidably attaching to reinforcing tape **110**. This provides players with an easily visible indication of the score of their sports activity. Other embodiments of the symbol indicating assembly **30** are considered within the scope of the present invention, including but not limited to, an assembly having a pointer to indicate the score. Moreover, it is contemplated that the symbol indicating assembly **30** may be constructed from plastic, metal, or any other appropriate material.

In another embodiment of the present invention, two indicating means **20** are positioned on both the front face **101** and the back face **102** of the game net **10**, such that on each face, one indicating means **20** is located closer to one of the side edges **13** and the other indicating means **20**

is located closer to the other of the side edges **13**. In this manner, on each face of the game net **10**, one indicating means **20** is for representing that team's score and one indicating means **20** is used to represent their opponent's score. Furthermore, a plurality of scoring symbols **21** are positioned on both the front face **101** and the back face **102** of the game net **10**, such that each symbol indicating assembly **30** is capable of emphasizing the same one of the plurality of scoring symbols **21** on both the front face **101** and the back face **102** of the game net **10**. Thus, when one team adjusts its score on one side of game net **10**, their opponent on the other side of game net **10** sees the score adjusted as well. This enables each team to easily, accurately, and visually determine both their score and their opponent's score at all times. It is contemplated that the plurality of scoring symbols **21** could be printed such that the score for the two different teams are printed in different colors to further facilitate the determination of each team's score.

In this embodiment, as shown in Fig. 4, the symbol indicating assembly **30** includes a first planar surface **31**, a void **32** through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols **21** is visible on one side of game net **10**, a second planar surface **34**, and a void **35** through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols **21** is visible on the other side of game net **10**. Planar surface **31** is connected to planar surface **34** by a connecting member **36**, such that each surface is pulled slightly toward the other. This enables the symbol indicating assembly **30** to be slidably attached to the reinforcing tape **110**.

It is contemplated by the present invention that at least one indicating device **20** may be used for indicating the number of games won by a team. In this manner, additional scoring symbols **21** may be added to represent the score in games. Also, at least one additional symbol indicating assembly **30** may be added to represent the current number of games won by a team.

In another embodiment of the present invention, the indicating device **20** includes a flat plate **40**, as shown in Fig. 5. The plate **40** includes at least one slot **41** formed therein and has a plurality of scoring symbols **21** printed on plate **40**. Symbol indicating assembly **42** is slidably attached to the plate **40** through at least one slot **41**. Symbol indicating assembly **42** has a planar surface **43** and a void **44** through which one of the plurality of scoring symbols **21** is visible, representing the current

score. The indicating device **20** of this embodiment may be connected to the game net **10** or it is contemplated that the indicating device **20** may be connected to a fixed structure, such as a pole.

In yet another embodiment of the present invention, the indicating device **20** include an LCD display **50**, as shown in Fig. 6. The LCD display **50** is connected to the game net **10**. The LCD display **50** includes a score button **51** for adding a point to the current score and a reset button **52** for returning the current score to zero.

Although this invention has been described in conjunction with specific embodiments thereof, it is evident that many alternatives, modifications and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the preferred embodiments of the invention as set forth herein are intended to be illustrative, not limiting. Various changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A net scoring system, comprising:

a game net having a generally rectangular shape, wherein said game net is defined by a top edge, a bottom edge, opposing side edges, a front face, and a back face; and

at least one indicating means for displaying a game score, said at least one indicating means
5 being connected to said game net.

2. The net scoring system according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one indicating means is located on at least one of said top edge, said bottom edge, and said opposing side edges.

3. The net scoring system according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one indicating means is located on at least one of said front face and said back face.

4. The net scoring system according to Claim 1, wherein said game net further comprises a reinforcing tape attached to said top edge, said bottom edge, and said opposing side edges;

wherein said at least one indicating means comprises:

a plurality of scoring symbols located on said reinforcing tape; and

symbol indicating means for emphasizing one of said plurality of scoring symbols to represent a score.

5. The net scoring system according to Claim 4, wherein said symbol indicating means comprises:

a planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of said plurality of scoring symbols may be made visible; and

fastening means extending from said planar surface for slidably attaching said symbol indicating means to said reinforcing tape.

6. The net scoring system according to Claim 4, wherein said plurality of scoring symbols are located on said front face and said back face, such that said symbol indicating means is capable of emphasizing the same symbol on both said front face and said back face.

7. The net scoring system according to Claim 6, wherein said symbol indicating means comprises:

a first planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of said plurality of scoring symbols located on said front face may be made visible;

5 a second planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of said plurality of scoring symbols located on said back face may be made visible; and

wherein said first planar surface is connected to said second planar surface such that said symbol indicating means is slidably attached to said reinforcing tape.

8. The net scoring system according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one indicating means comprises:

an LCD display, wherein said LCD display includes a processing means for adding a point to the current score and a processing means for resetting the current score to zero.

9. The net scoring system according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one indicating means comprises:

a plate having a flat planar surface;

at least one slot, wherein said at least one slot is formed in said plate;

5 a plurality of scoring symbols located on said plate; and

at least one symbol indicating means slidably attached to said plate through said at least one slot.

10. The net scoring system according to Claim 9, wherein said plate is fixedly attached to said reinforcing tape.

11. The net scoring system according to Claim 9, wherein said at least one symbol indicating means includes a front planar surface having portions defining a void through which one of said scoring symbols may be made visible.

12. A method of indicating the score of a sporting contest, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a game net including at least one scoring symbol located on said game net, and at least one symbol indicating means connected to said game net; and

selectively sliding said at least one symbol indicating means over said at least one scoring symbol to indicate the current score.

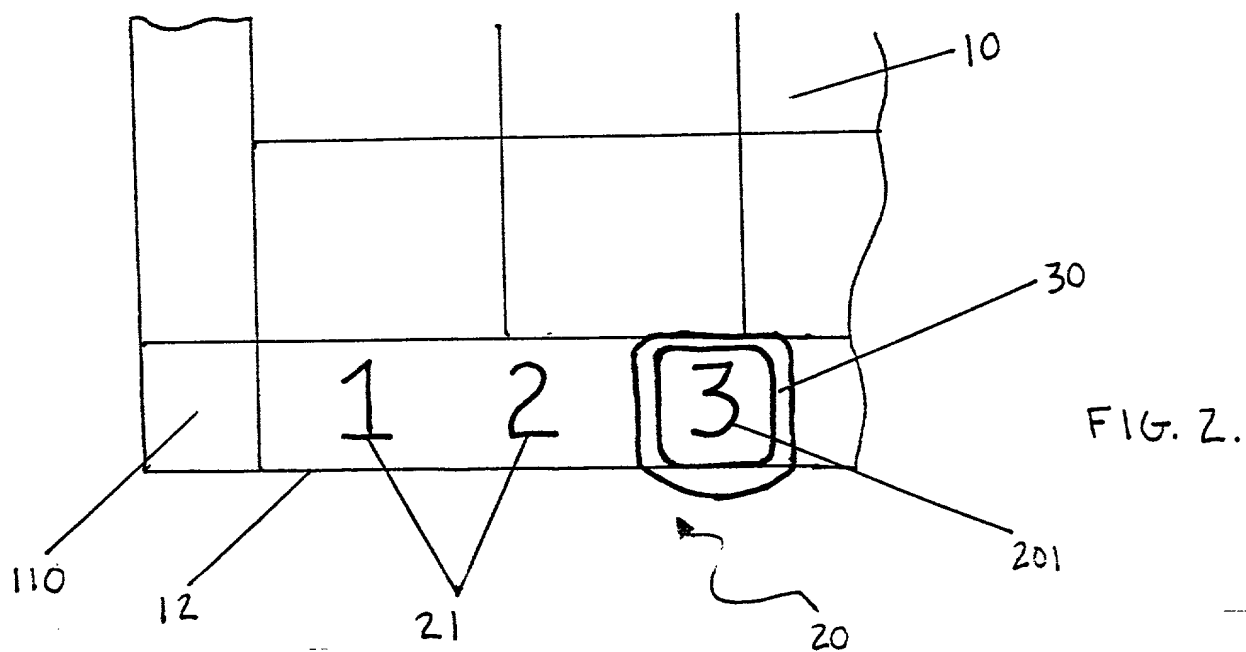
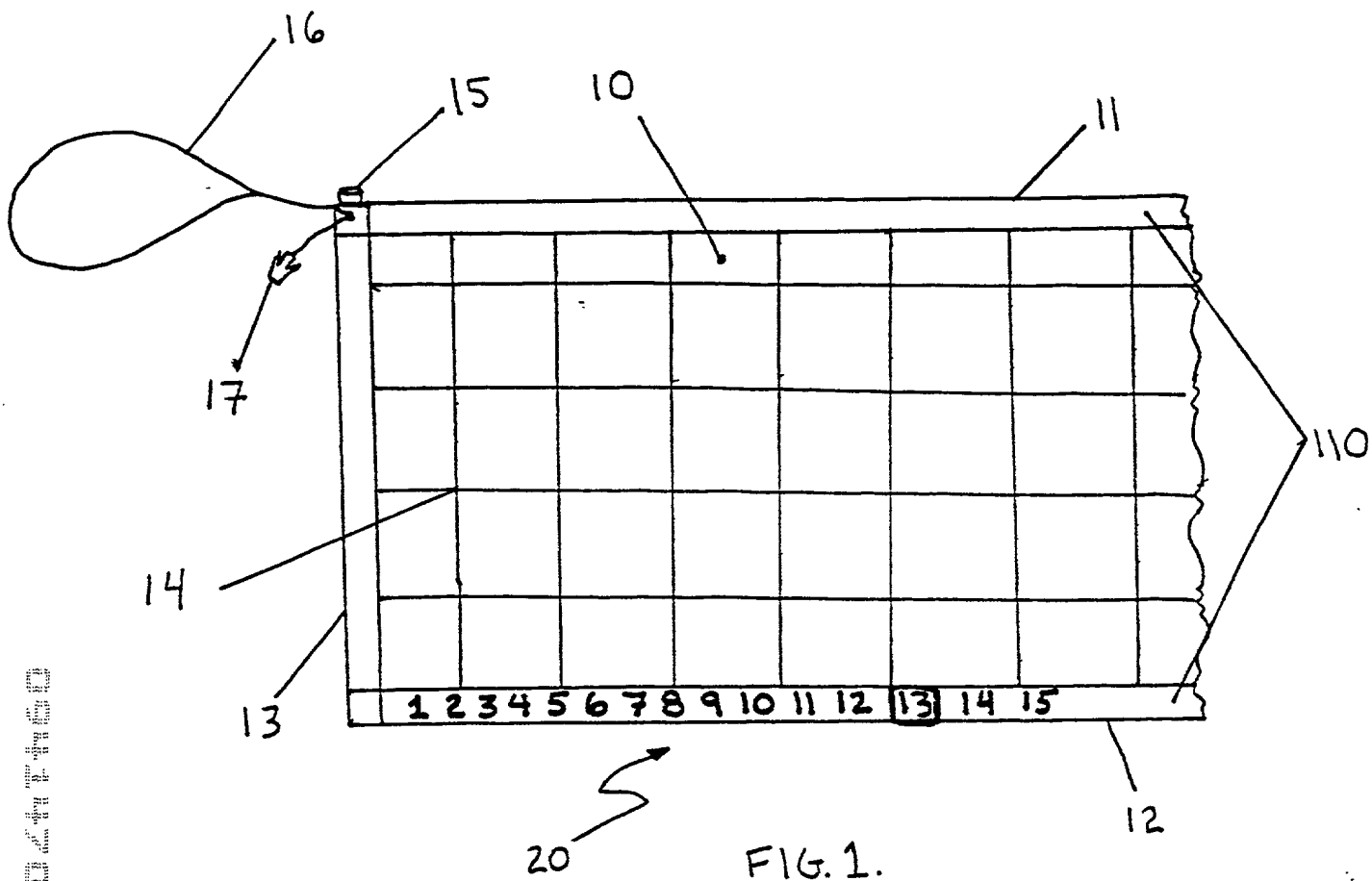
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention is directed to a net scoring system for accurate and convenient scoring of a sporting contest. The net scoring system has a game net which is of a generally rectangular shape and has a periphery defined by a top edge, a bottom edge, and opposing side edges. The net scoring system also includes at least one indicating device for displaying a game score that is connected to the game net. The indicating device may be located on at least one of the top edge, the bottom edge, and the opposing side edges. The indicating device includes a plurality of scoring symbols and a symbol indicating assembly that selectively emphasizes one of the plurality of scoring symbols to represent a score.

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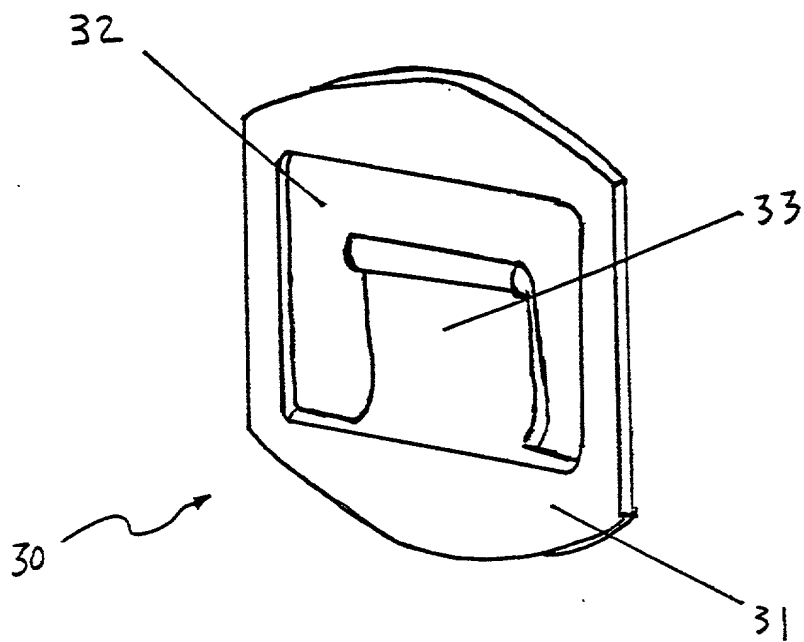


FIG. 3.

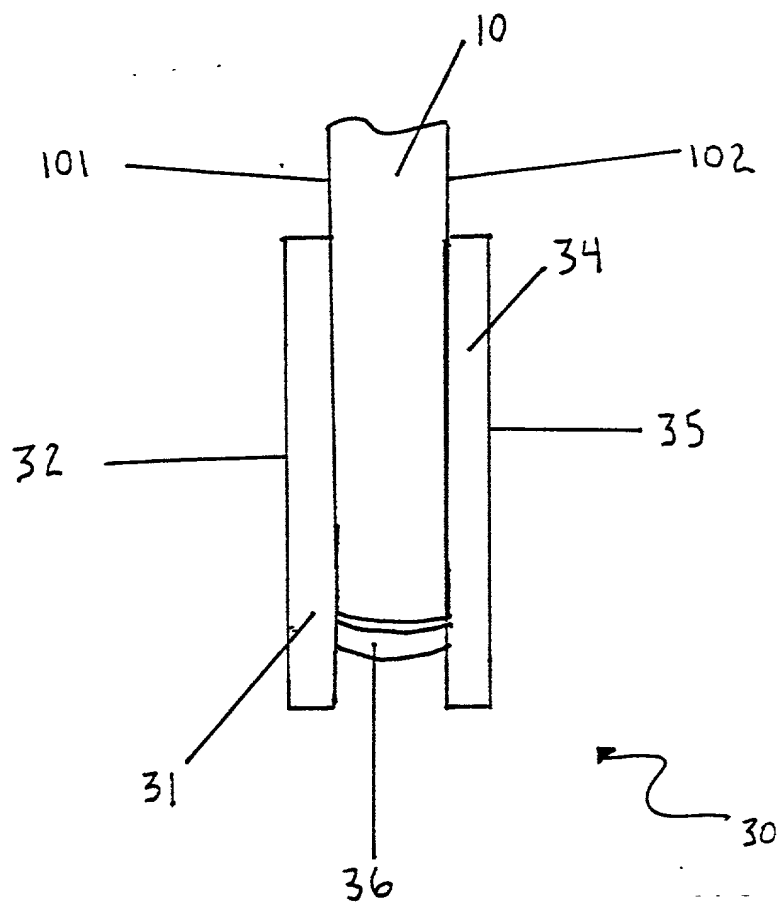


FIG. 4.

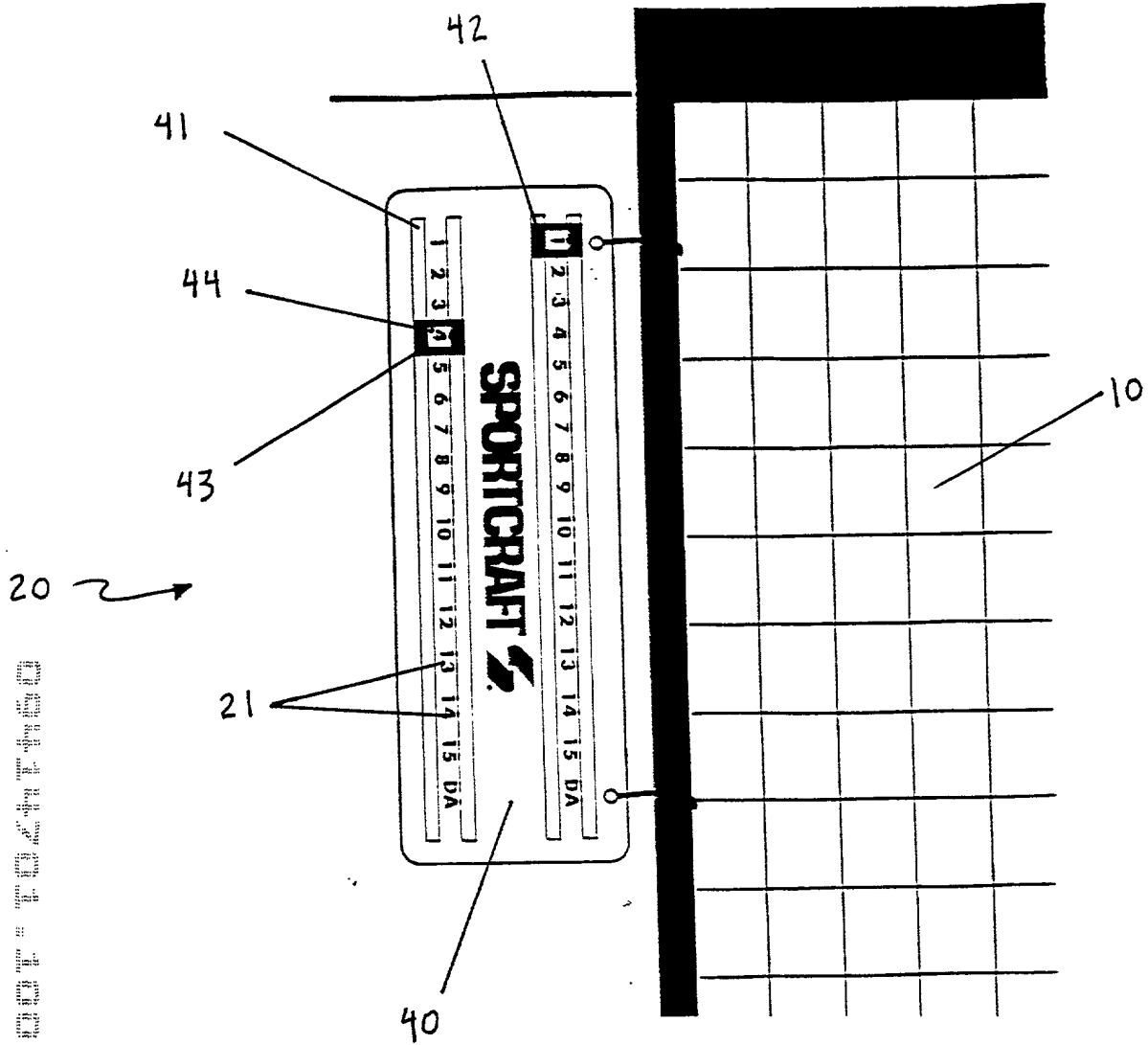


FIG. 5.

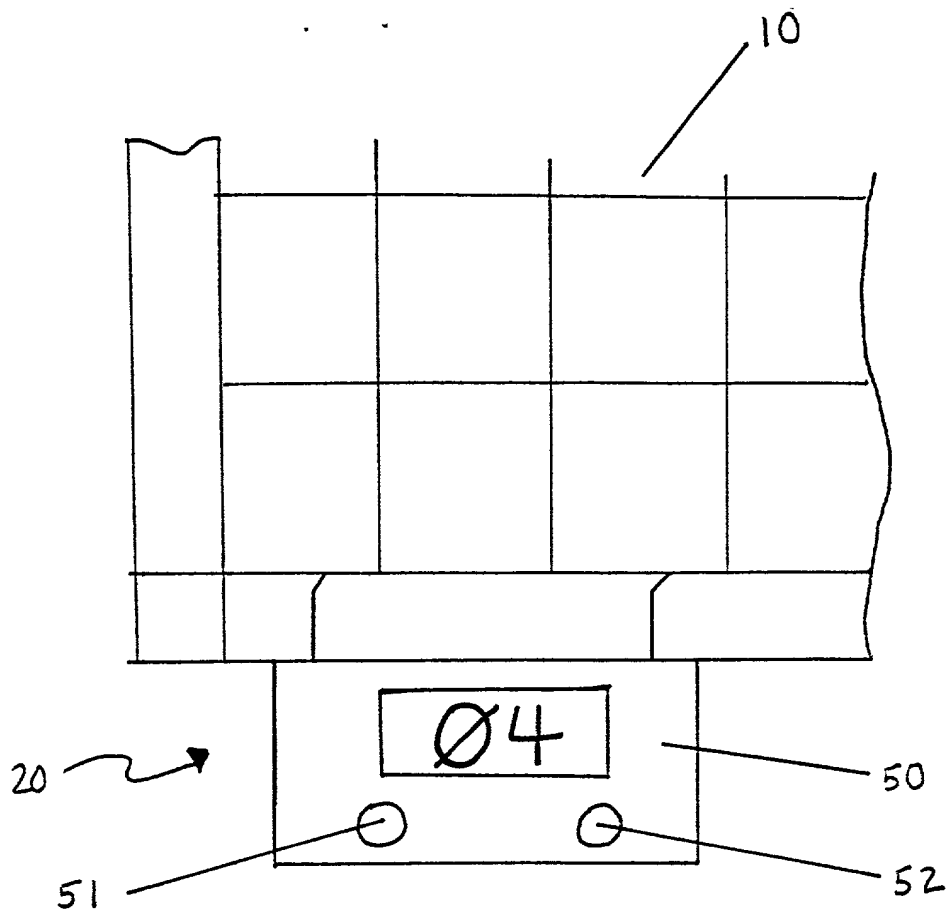


FIG. 6

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

We hereby declare that:

Our respective residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to our respective individual names.

We believe that we are the original, first and joint inventors of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

NET SCORING SYSTEM

A patent application was filed on October 8, 1999 as Application Serial No. _____.

We hereby state that we have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

We acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

We hereby claim foreign/provisional priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

Prior Foreign/Provisional Application(s)			<u>Priority Claimed</u>
_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	_____ Yes/No
_____ (Number)	_____ (Country)	_____ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	_____ Yes/No

We hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) or PCT international application(s) designating the United States of America listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, we acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

(Application Serial No.) (Filing Date) (Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

(Application Serial No.) (Filing Date) (Status)
(patented, pending, abandoned)

We hereby declare that all statements made herein of our own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Power of Attorney: As the named inventors, we hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith with full power of substitution and revocation: Patrick J. Coyne, Reg. No. 31,821, David R. Yohannan, Reg. No. 37,480, Glenn T. Barrett, Reg. No. 38,705, Katharine I. Matthews, Reg. No. 40,336; and John N. Coulby, Reg. No. 43,565.

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(202) 342-8606

Full name of first inventor: Michael Nally

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: _____

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Full name of third inventor: Beth Shergalis

Inventor's signature: _____ Date: _____

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